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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL KMDR KPAL KWBG KPAO IS
SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (9/23): "EAST JERUSALEM
SETTLEMENTS SHOW ISRAELI LACK OF COMMITMENT TO PEACE"

Main Stories:

Front pages highlight news from Jerusalem that a Palestinian driver ran his car into a group of Israeli soldiers walking on a downtown sidewalk on September 22. The papers note 19 injuries and the killing of the driver. Al Quds calls the driver a "martyr" [shahid] and explains that he lived in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Jabal Al-Mukaber.

Palestinian Authority President Abbas' visit to Ireland and his meeting with Irish Foreign Minister Michael Martin receives highlighted coverage on all dailies' front pages. Abbas is quoted reiterating his commitment to working with the new administrations of the U.S. and Israel. The papers note that Abbas is visiting Ireland en route to meetings in the U.S. In related news, Al-Quds quotes chief Palestinian negotiator Ahmad Quray expressing pessimism over the possibility of reaching a peace agreement with Israel by the end of the year.

Palestinian Authority (PA) Prime Minister Fayyad's speech before the September 22 donors conference in New York is the top story in Al-Quds. The paper highlights his remarks that Israeli settlement expansion greatly hinders the growth of the Palestinian economy and hampers efforts to realize the two-state solution. Other front-pages quote Fayyad saying that the PA has received pledges from donor countries in the amount of \$300 million, including \$150 from the U.S.

Several front-page articles report on Israeli Foreign Minister Livni's efforts to form a new government, including her call on the opposition to join a coalition government.

BLOCK QUOTES:

¶1. The main editorial of Al-Quds independent argues under the title, "Judaization plans are Non-Stop As Are Efforts to Launch Dialogue?!!" (09/23): "A few days ago construction started near the Magreb Gate [Old City, Jerusalem] to build, it seems, settlement neighborhoods. There is also the issue of the planned bridge [in Jerusalem's Old City near the Al Aqsa mosque] despite numerous Palestinian, Arabic and Islamic objections and demonstrations... Here, what is peculiar is the announcement made by Jerusalem mayor Uri Lupolianski, that the bridge to the Magreb gate will be exclusively for Muslims and that construction is being carried out jointly and in cooperation and coordination with UNESCO, the Islamic Waqf and Jordan because of an Arab request to UNESCO's Heritage Committee....!!! This issue needs to be clarified so that the public understands what is really going on in the sensitive area leading to Al-Haram Al-Sharif [Al Aqsa mosque compound]. Last year, after Annapolis, the PLO... published a detailed report showing that settlement units and tenders for settlement construction have accelerated into the thousands. Most of the construction is in the Holy City, which is an explicit Israeli violation of understandings reached at Annapolis... [U.S., Israel and Quartet] have turned a blind eye to these violations and not one report has been issued to expose the lack of Israeli commitment to its obligations ... Every day Israel offers new evidence to skeptics that it is not interested in genuine peace and is not serious about its commitments."

¶2. Under the title "Cairo Dialogue ... A Golden Opportunity", columnist Mohannid Abid Al-Hamid argues in independent Al-Ayyam (09/23): "It is really strange that Hamas continues to deny reality

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and try to prove that its resilience is paying off; that the siege is ending without them having had to compromise their positions!... The only standard by which Hamas measures its success is by its ability to hold onto power at any cost. Probably [Hamas] considers a meeting with a representative... from any country, or winning the positive bias of Al-Jazeera as a worthy accomplishment. To say the least, [Hamas] calculations are purely for the benefit of the party.

If the goal is to control the community without national reconciliation and liberation and with a disregard for democratic principles, political and cultural plurality, [Hamas'] authority has lost its most fundamental justification [and legitimacy]..."

MARCHESE